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**DEL REY
COMICS**

NO. 4 \$3.99

**FURTH
SHASTEEN
RUFFINO**

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

THE TALISMAN

THE ROAD OF TRIALS

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Please email us at delreycomics@randomhouse.com.

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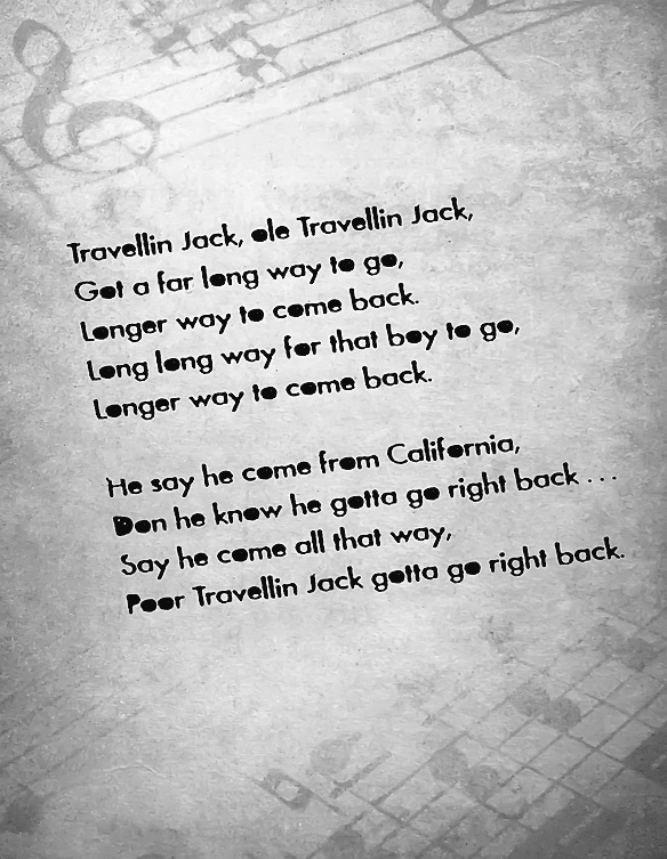
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Jack Sawyer is on a quest
both epic and deeply personal—to save
his mother's life and to find the mysterious
Talisman whose power could alter the destinies
of two very different worlds.

He has learned how to “flip” between
twin realms—the one where we reside and the
land of magic and monsters known as the Territories—
and he has survived his first encounters with the brutish
Osmond and his malign master, Morgan of Orris.
But there are only so many narrow escapes a boy can
make—and allies are in short supply. Pursued by enemies
who would see his mother killed and both worlds
brought under their dominion, Jack must stay on the
move and keep his wits about him as he looks
for opportunities to complete his quest and
fulfill a destiny he never sought but
cannot relinquish.



Travellin Jack, ole Travellin Jack,
Got a far long way to go,
Longer way to come back.
Long long way for that boy to go,
Longer way to come back.

He say he come from California,
Den he know he gotta go right back ...
Say he come all that way,
Poor Travellin Jack gotta go right back.

Somewhere in Upstate
New York, U.S.A.

HUH?

TWANK

WHAT A
NIGHTMARE!

NO.
IT WAS
REAL.

I MUST
HAVE SPILLED
A LOT!

GUESS I
WON'T BE FLIPPING
BACK INTO THE
TERRITORIES
FOR A WHILE.

Near Batavia,
New York

Six days later

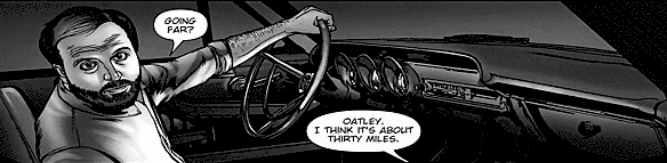
IF I CAN
WORK MY WAY
TO BUFFALO, I'LL
BE ABLE TO SWING
SOUTH. MAYBE I'LL
EVEN CATCH A RIDE
ALL THE WAY TO
CHICAGO!

IN THE
MEANTIME I
NEED TO GET
A JOB.

BUT
WHERE?

OATLEY,
THAT SOUNDS
SMALL AND
SAFE.





GOING
FAR?

OATLEY.
I THINK IT'S ABOUT
THIRTY MILES.



I HATE TO
SEE YOUNG KIDS
HITCHHIKING. TOO
MANY CRAZIES
OUT THERE.

YOU'RE NOT
PLAYING HOOKY,
ARE YOU?



NO, SIR. I
JUST HAVE TO
GO OVER TO OATLEY
TO LIVE WITH MY AUNT
HELEN FOR A WHILE.
SHE'S A SCHOOL-
TEACHER.



YOUR
PARENTS TOLD
YOU TO HITCHHIKE
ALL THE WAY TO
OATLEY?

NO! MY DAD DIED
LAST WINTER AND MY
MOM'S REAL SICK, SHE GAVE
ME BUS MONEY, BUT I
THOUGHT I'D SAVE IT.



THAT'S YOUR
ROAD, KID. HOPE
YOU DON'T HAVE TO
SPEND TOO MUCH
TIME IN OATLEY.

IT'S A REAL
PIT. KIND OF PLACE
WHERE THEY DRINK
THE BEER AND EAT
THE GLASS.













I...UH...
SAW YOUR
HELP WANTED
SIGN.

YOU MUST
HAVE LEARNED
TO READ ON ONE
OF THE DAYS YOU
WEREN'T PLAYING
HOOKY.



COME HERE.
SIT DOWN.
I AIN'T GONNA
BITE YOU.



YES, SIR.
I THOUGHT THIS
WAS A BAR AND
GRILL.



LOOKING
FOR A JOB,
HUH?





MY STEPPAD
BEATS ME A LOT,
SO I'M GOING TO
CHICAGO TO FIND
MY REAL DAD.

CRACK



SO YOU
THINK YOU AND
DAD ARE GOING TO
BE CHUMS AND LIVE
HAPPILY EVER
AFTER, HUH?



AT LEAST
MY REAL DAD
NEVER HUNG ME UP
BY THE NECK IN
MY CLOSET.

JESUS,
KID! YOUR
STEEPFATHER
DID THAT?



COME BACK TO THE
STOREROOM WITH
ME, KID.

IF YOU CAN
REALLY ROCK ONE
OF THOSE KEGS UP
ON ITS SIDE, YOU
GOT A JOB.

RUN, KID.
THERE'S STILL
TIME.



SHUT
THE HELL UP,
LORI.

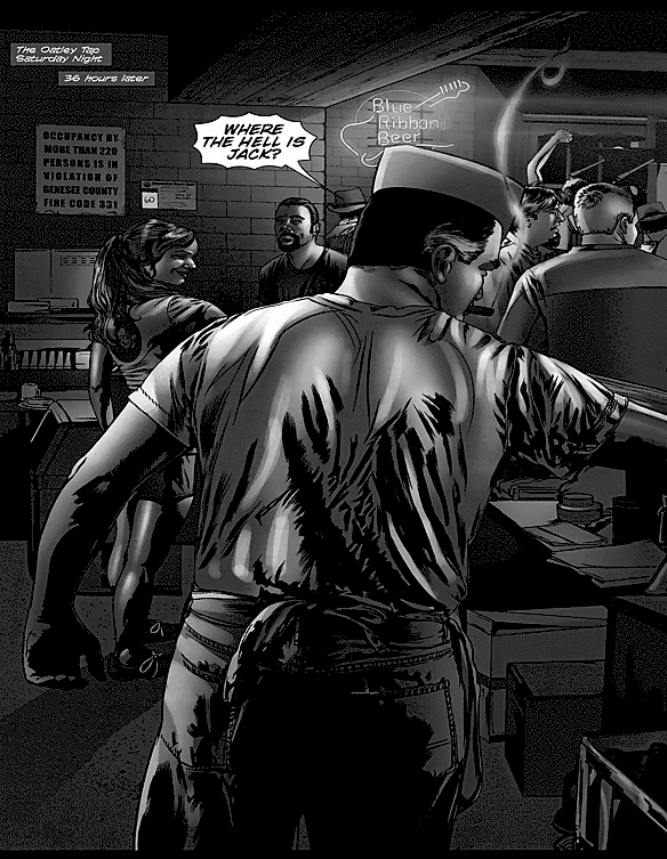
The Catley Top
Saturday Night

36 hours later

OCCUPANCY BY
MORE THAN 220
PERSONS IS IN
VIOLATION OF
GENESEE COUNTY
FIRE CODE 331

WHERE
THE HELL IS
JACK?

Blue
Ribbon
Beer





YOU ALLUS
TURNED YOUR OTHER
CHEEK...

AND SAID
THERE'S A BETTER
WORLD WAITIN' FOR
THE MEK...

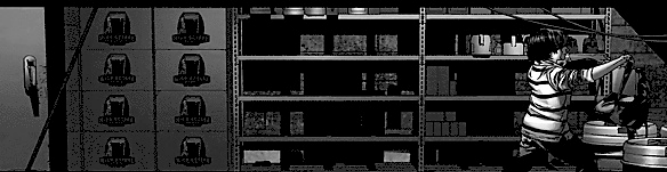


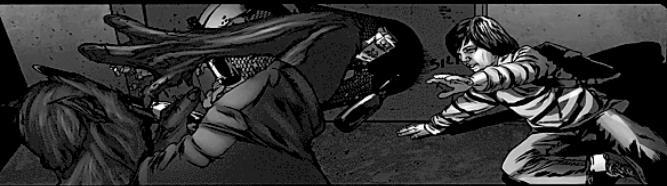
















IS HE
GONE?

WOOF
WOOF
WOOF

TO BE CONTINUED

LETTERS FROM THE TERRITORIES

I've been a major fan of Stephen King's work for a long, long time now and since *The Talisman* is one of my favorites I naturally got a bit nervous when I heard that it was going to be turned into a comic. Would it be possible to do Steve and Peter's book justice? Well, after reading the first two issues I'm convinced *The Talisman* works very well as a comic, and personally I can't wait to get my first glimpse of Wolf!

—Lilja (www.Liljas-Library.com)

Thanks, Lilja. Seeing as how you're one of Stephen King's biggest fans—your website is awesome—we're really happy to hear this from you. Watch for Wolf's first appearance in Issue 5.

I just read Issues 0, 1, and 2 of *The Talisman*.

This is great stuff!!! I tried to read the novel a few months ago, but I couldn't get into it. I have read *Black House* and I loved it, but for some reason the novel of *The Talisman* just didn't pull me in. But the comic pulled me right in from the first page. So far, it's been excellent.

How many issues is this slated to run? Will it be a series of mini-series or one long series? Either way, I am on board for the duration.

Thanks, Dan

P.S. I picked up copies of both covers.

Hi, Dan,

We're happy to read that you are enjoying our adaptation of The Talisman so far. I think each issue just gets better as we go along. We're currently planning to go at least eighteen issues. The first arc, The Road of Trials, ends after Issue 5. Issue 1 of the second arc, A Collision of Worlds, will be available in comic book shops everywhere in June 2010.

Glad to have you along for the duration. Jack needs all the help he can get!

P.S. Make sure you bag and board those alternate covers. There aren't many of them available!

To the publishers of *The Talisman*:

I had been worrying about where I would be getting my next Stephen King comics fix when and if the Marvel Comics series comes to an end.

It's nice to know that another Stephen King book, *The Talisman*, is being adapted to graphic form, even if it's published by a different publisher. After reading Issues 0, 1, and 2, I've definitely no complaint about how the novel is being treated.

No one minds if I ask a few questions?

1) Is the comic being broken up into several mini-series adapting *The Talisman* similar to Marvel Comics' *The Stand*? If so, how many issues are estimated to adapt *The Talisman*?

2) If sales do well, is Del Rey Comics expecting to follow up with the sequel, *Black House*?

3) Are there any other Stephen King books in consideration for adapting to graphic form?

Please do keep up with the terrific work, and I'll do my best to stick around.

Yours sincerely, Tom Fitzpatrick

Hi, Tom,

Thank you for the kind words. The Talisman is Del Rey's first monthly comic book, and it is no small feat to start with one that you know will instantly be compared to books that Marvel Comics is publishing. So your praise of our comic means a lot to us.

As I just replied to Dan, we plan to publish at least eighteen comic books for The Talisman broken into at least three story arcs. Are we considering other Stephen King projects? Never say never. Right now we're focusing our energies on making The Talisman the best comic book we possibly can. Check out our websites, www.delreycomics.com and www.survudu.com, for up-to-date information on other graphic novels and fantasy and science fiction Del Rey is working on.

We'll keep up the good work, and hopefully you'll stick around.

I'm reading *The Dark Tower* and *The Stand* and now *The Talisman* in comics. Looking forward to the next issues. Great stuff. Have you thought of center foldouts of the artwork, maybe a poster or just part of the story?

—Eddy

Eddy,

That's a great idea and one we will keep in mind for future issues.

Thanks for writing in.

If you have a question or comment, please write us at delreycomics@randomhouse.com.

And watch yourself while visiting the Territories...

The Importance of Magic

Throughout my childhood I longed to live in a world where magic was possible. Though I knew the difference between *reality* and *daydream*, and though I realized that it was only in books that children walked into wardrobes and ended up in snowy woodlands where fauns invited them home for tea, I couldn't help hoping. With every fantasy story I read, I learned a little bit more about how these portals between realities operated. Sometimes the *modus operandi* was a wardrobe, but it could just as easily be a book, a mirror, a Victorian desk containing a tiny golden key, or the bole of an ancient tree. I did not expect that all of the worlds connected to ours would be good ones. Some of them would probably be terrifying or even dangerous, but I was willing to take the risk. After all, what was the point of safety if that safety felt meaningless? Sometimes, when I stared at a distant horizon, I could feel that other world hovering nearby. If only I could find the right words or the right incantation, the air before me would begin to shimmer. *This* world and that *other* world would become one, and magic would flood into our dull and mundane reality like sunlight into a shuttered room....

I grew up in a suburban town outside of Philadelphia. In my town, people didn't have wardrobes, they had closets, and they had little interest in magic. Few of my agemates read at all, and the ones who did tended to dismiss fantasy and science fiction as nonsense. After first grade was over, we were expected to buckle down and get serious. We were told

that if we studied hard we would be able to get into advanced placement classes, and from there we'd make it into good colleges. If we kept up our grades, someday we'd get nice, sensible jobs. We'd live in the suburbs, in a house full of nice, new furniture and lots of those wonderful, soulless modern closets.

It sounded like living death to me. I have nothing against closets (I have some of my own now), but I didn't want to live in one. That is, unless it had a false back, and when I pushed through the coats and mothball-smelling jackets I would find that soft and fragrant pine needles were brushing against my face....

For many years, my addiction to fantasy and fairy tales was my guilty secret. Someday I'd grow out of it, or at least that was what everyone told me. You know, like acne. And all those fabulous authors I'd read? Well, that was kids' stuff. When I got to college, I'd learn what real literature was about. I'd discover that everything my A.P. English teacher told me was true. Literature was sensible: It had its feet on the ground, and the important books were *realistic*.



But in the realm of higher education I made a fantastic discovery. The oldest, most revered literary tradition was the *magical* tradition. Realism as we know it? That's a nineteenth-century creation. Go back a little further and what will you find? *Beowulf*. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. *The Iliad*. *The Odyssey*. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. *The Golden Ass*. Aeschylus. Euripides. Shakespeare. Move forward in time just a little (after all, in terms of literary history, a century is a relatively brief period), and you'll find the Surrealists. Arthur Machen. Algernon Blackwood. Edgar Allan Poe. And, of course, Stephen King and Peter Straub...

The part of me that dreams knew about the Territories long before I read *The Talisman*. After all, it is the magical land of fairy tales transformed for a modern audience, and the trials that our young hero undergoes are reflections of the dilemmas that contemporary people face. At the beginning of *The Talisman*, Jack is a frightened boy. He is a version of the Everyman, or perhaps I should say the *Everyboy*. Jack is faced with two terrible problems. His mother is dying of cancer and his father's ex-business partner is trying to steal the family's livelihood. But what can a twelve-year-old boy do in the face of such enormous difficulties?

He does what boys and young men have always done in fairy tales. He goes on a quest. His purpose? To fetch the Talisman, the essence of magic, and bring it back to our world. It will take a miracle for Lily Sawyer to recover from her illness and for Morgan Sloat's plans to be foiled, but miracles are just what Jack is after. And since miracles don't happen in our world of hard science and business degrees, he has to travel into an alternative universe—a medieval world where magic is still possible and where people



have doubles whose positions in society fit their moral worth. In the Territories, Jack's mother is a queen and his father is a prince. Speedy Parker—a janitor in our world—is an important dignitary of some kind. And Jack himself? Although Jack doesn't have a Twinner, we learn that Jack is a very special boy. One who, though only twelve years old, can help save two worlds.

A central theme in ancient magical narratives is the recognition that we human beings are not alone in the universe. Somewhere, close by, is *another* world. Call it the land of Faerie, or the land of the dead, or an alternative universe. Often, in this other world, justice supersedes human justice, and magic is so powerful that it can defeat death. In the Russian folktales I read as a child, this magic was found in the Waters of Death and the Waters of Life, which would be sprinkled upon a corpse to return it to vibrant life. In the Territories, this magic is found in the Talisman.

But the royal Territories have another link to the mythic traditions of our world. In the distant past, men and women believed that their kings and queens were appointed by God. According to this worldview, the body of the ruler is the body of the land, and the well-being of one is indivisible from the well-being of the other. If the queen is sick, in body or in mind, then the land will fall to ruin. To cure the land you must first cure the queen. The one will only flourish if the other is in balance. Morgan Sloat wants to exploit the Territories for his own gain, but in order to do this his Twinner must first make sure that the queen dies. Lily's cancer and the Territories' Blasted Lands are linked.

It is no coincidence that in order to cure his mother, Jack must first travel through the

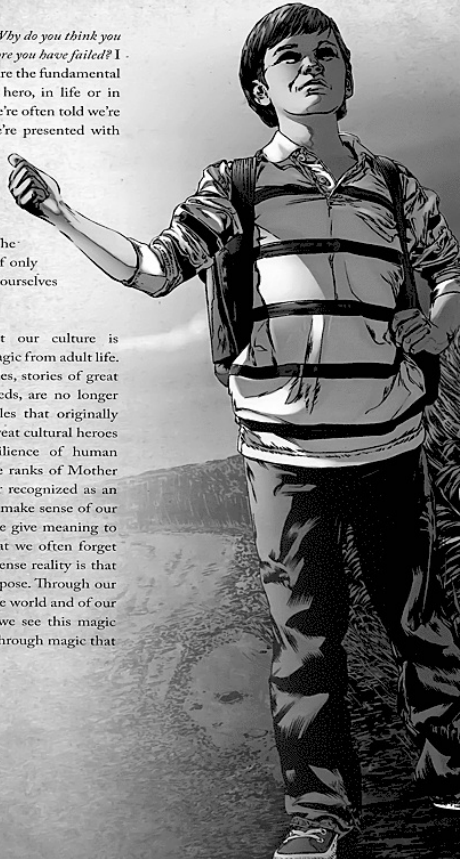
terrible, ravaged landscape to the west of the palace. Such sympathetic relationships are the basis of magic. To begin, you must understand the parallels between the human world and the natural world, and then you must have faith in the importance of your quest and in your own ability to succeed. And of all the trials that Jack must face, having faith is perhaps the most challenging part. In my experience, it is only by rejecting the rational and realistic voices that tell us we are inadequate for the task ahead that we accomplish anything at all. Realism? It defeats us. Magic? It saves us every time.



Who do you think you are? Why do you think you can succeed where others before you have failed? I suppose, in the end, these are the fundamental questions that face every hero, in life or in fairy tales. In our world, we're often told we're not good enough, and we're presented with plenty of evidence to prove it. But in the magical, transformational world of fairy tales, we are all princes and princesses. We all are capable of magic. The Talisman is ours to find, if only we have enough faith in ourselves to begin the journey.

Sometimes I think that our culture is determined to eradicate magic from adult life. Fairy tales and wonder tales, stories of great quests and of magical deeds, are no longer given their due. Those tales that originally recorded the histories of great cultural heroes and of the amazing resilience of human beings are relegated to the ranks of Mother Goose. They are no longer recognized as an essential factor in how we make sense of our own experience, or how we give meaning to the world around us. What we often forget in our fast-paced, no-nonsense reality is that dreaming also serves a purpose. Through our stories we make sense of the world and of our experience. And whether we see this magic as literal or symbolic, it is through magic that true change takes place.

All the best,
Robin Furth





ISSUE 5 ON
SALE IN MARCH.

"Extraordinary . . . makes your hair stand on end."

—*The Washington Post*, on the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Talisman*



Once you've seen the Talisman, nothing will ever be the same.

Jack Sawyer may be out of the Territories, but that doesn't mean he's out of danger. For the time being, he's back in America, in upstate New York, on the road and on his own . . . or is he?

Shadowed by an unseen pursuer, Jack seeks work at a run-down bar populated by dead-enders and drunken cowboys. But keeping the tankards full and staying on the good side of his abusive new boss may prove to be the least of his worries. For when he's not dodging blows, Jack is attracting the attention of the Oatley Tap's newest regular: a mysterious stranger whose cold dead eyes conceal his darker purpose as the agent of Jack's dread rival for possession of the Talisman.



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Massimo Carnevale

Back-cover illustration:

Tony Shasteen and Nei Ruffino

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